

Amid Multiple Investigations, NYPD Defends Its 311 Response at Council Hearing

By Jesse Coburn | Oct 27, 2021 | 16 COMMENTS



NYPD officials, including Deputy Chief Isa Abbassi, (far right) testified on Tuesday.

City Council members voiced frustration with the NYPD's handling of 311 complaints about illegal parking at a hearing Tuesday, but police officials defended the department's efforts.

Lawmakers on the Council's transportation and oversight committees, citing recent investigations, noted many 311 complaints about illegal parking are now closed suspiciously fast and that NYPD's official responses to them often appear untrue.

But the police brass said that the department takes 311 reports about illegal parking seriously, that the agency has sped up response times to such complaints and that some officers had been disciplined for mishandling 311 complaints, though officials did not say how many.

The back-and-forth followed two recent investigations into the NYPD's response to complaints about driver misconduct submitted via 311, the city's municipal services and information center. In one, Council investigators filed 50 service requests about illegal parking and parking placard abuse to observe the NYPD's response. Police officers did not show up for 14 of them despite saying that they had.

Streetsblog also [investigated](#) the police handling of 311 complaints, analyzing more than 26 million 311 service requests since 2010. This reporting revealed the agency routinely ignores complaints about illegal parking, chronically reckless driving and abandoned cars, fostering a culture of lawlessness on city streets that residents say is getting worse as traffic deaths [climb](#) to their highest point in years.



How Streetsblog covered the story last week.

These investigations followed years of resident complaints about the NYPD's apparent apathy toward illegal parking, placard abuse and other problems on the streets of New York City — complaints that have been [exhaustively documented on](#) social media. Streetsblog has also reported on instances in which 311 users reported receiving harassing [calls](#) or [messages](#) after filing complaints to the NYPD about driver misconduct.

According to Deputy Chief Isa Abbassi, 311 complaints are “exceptionally important” to the department. Officers “are continually reminded of the importance of responding to these service requests, and responding to them in an appropriate and efficient way,” he told lawmakers at the virtual hearing.

Abbassi said the agency has shaved an hour off its typical response time to illegal parking complaints since last year, with the average report now being closed in under 90 minutes. The agency has lots of oversight in place to ensure officers are responding to complaints appropriately, he said, and officers have been disciplined in the “anecdotal” instances when they haven't. The findings of the Council's investigation have been referred to the NYPD's Internal Affairs Bureau for review.

Such assurances did little to quell the frustration of some lawmakers.

Council Member Vanessa Gibson, who chairs the Oversight Committee, said instances in which the NYPD marked 311 complaints as closed without actually addressing the issues makes it appear as if the NYPD is “misleading the public on its traffic enforcement efforts by filing inaccurate complaint responses in the city's 311 system.” Regarding NYPD response times, she noted many drivers parking illegally have left the scene by the time officers say they have arrived.

Council Member Robert Holden, citing Streetsblog's investigation, noted the NYPD now closes thousands of 311 complaints about driver misconduct each year in five minutes or less. Former city officials told Streetsblog previously that it was implausible that officers were actually investigating and resolving so many complaints in under five minutes, given it takes the NYPD more than seven minutes on average to respond to even the most critical emergencies.

“Obviously five minutes is not realistic,” Holden said. “It's not acceptable.”

Abbassi described the under-five-minute trend “a problematic indicator,” but he said there are cases when complaints could legitimately be closed that quickly.

Council Member Eric Dinowitz said the quickly closed calls distort the department's 311 statistics. He called the sub-90-minute average response time touted by Abbassi “artificially low.”

The police officials promised further improvements to the department's 311 response, but some Council members remained concerned.

“Don't say that the NYPD's addressing this, because they're not,” Holden said. “It's not happening, it's getting worse.”

The NYPD did not respond to questions Tuesday about how many officers have been disciplined for mishandling 311 complaints, what discipline they faced, or whether the department will review issues with the NYPD's response to 311 complaints that were documented by Streetsblog.

Filed Under: 311, City Council, NYPD, Robert Holden, Traffic Enforcement, Vanessa Gibson, Promoted



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LimestoneKid

a year ago

Let's be honest, the NYPD makes ZERO effort.

I'm beginning to think that's what "Vision Zero" actually stands for.

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yippee1999

a year ago

I live in Astoria. Nuff said. ;-)

Telly's Taverna. Much of Steinway Street. Souvlaki Lady. Dunkin Donuts. Martha's Bakery. Mediterranean Market. Lefkos Pyrgos. Most of 31st Street. Ditmars between 33rd and 38th. 33rd and 34th Streets alongside the Acropolis Building. What do these all have in common? Rampant double-parking/idling in Traffic lanes, in MTA bus stops, in Bike Lanes and even ACROSS CROSSWALKS and ACROSS SIDEWALKS.

EVERYONE (and that includes DOT/NYPD) knows about it, and yet, 99% of residents don't seem to care. The car culture is THAT ingrained here. Pedestrians and cyclists have become THAT inured...feel THAT powerless...that they just accept it. It has become 'normalized'.

Whether it's illegal parking/idling, or the ever-larger vehicles that now litter our streets and more resemble military assault vehicles (complete with monster trucks wheels and bull bars on the front grille), or the SUPPOSEDLY illegal driver's side TINTED WINDOWS we see all over the place, it is clear that this city does not give a SHIT about pedestrians and cyclists, and that bully, selfish, entitled, pig-headed, environment-killing car owners are all that matter.

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glittertitsandshortbangs

a year ago

Meanwhile at every bike bridge entry/exit.....

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kevd

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a year ago

what's at every bike bridge entry/exit?

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Cops issuing tickets to bicyclists.

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kevd

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a year ago edited

as of today?

regularly?

Didn't see any last time I went into the city (granted, a week ago)

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glittertitsandshortbangs → kevd a year ago

SHERWOOD_000204

Regularly.

ALSO ON STREETS BLOG



NYPD Ignores Council Request for Info on Allegedly Fraudulent 311 Responses

By Jesse Cobb

Andy Gilbert

Council leaders had asked the NYPD to provide materials related to 14 311 service requests about illegal parking that police officers had marked as resolved despite never responding to the scenes of the infractions, according to council investigators. The only way this will be dealt with is by firing thousands of these worthless parasites and hiring people who actually care about doing their job in their stead.

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LiberalsAreBetter → Andy Gilbert

🕒 a year ago

Correction: The only way this will be dealt with is by firing thousands of these worthless parasites and NOT hiring anybody else.

Defund the police.

0 0 • Reply • Share ›



Wayne C

🕒 a year ago

It was so frustrating watching the hearing and listening to the NYPD take zero responsibility for their inaction on 311 calls. They had an excuse for everything that was brought up and I highly doubt we'll see much change out of them as it related to their response to 311 calls.

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Reader → Wayne C

🕒 a year ago

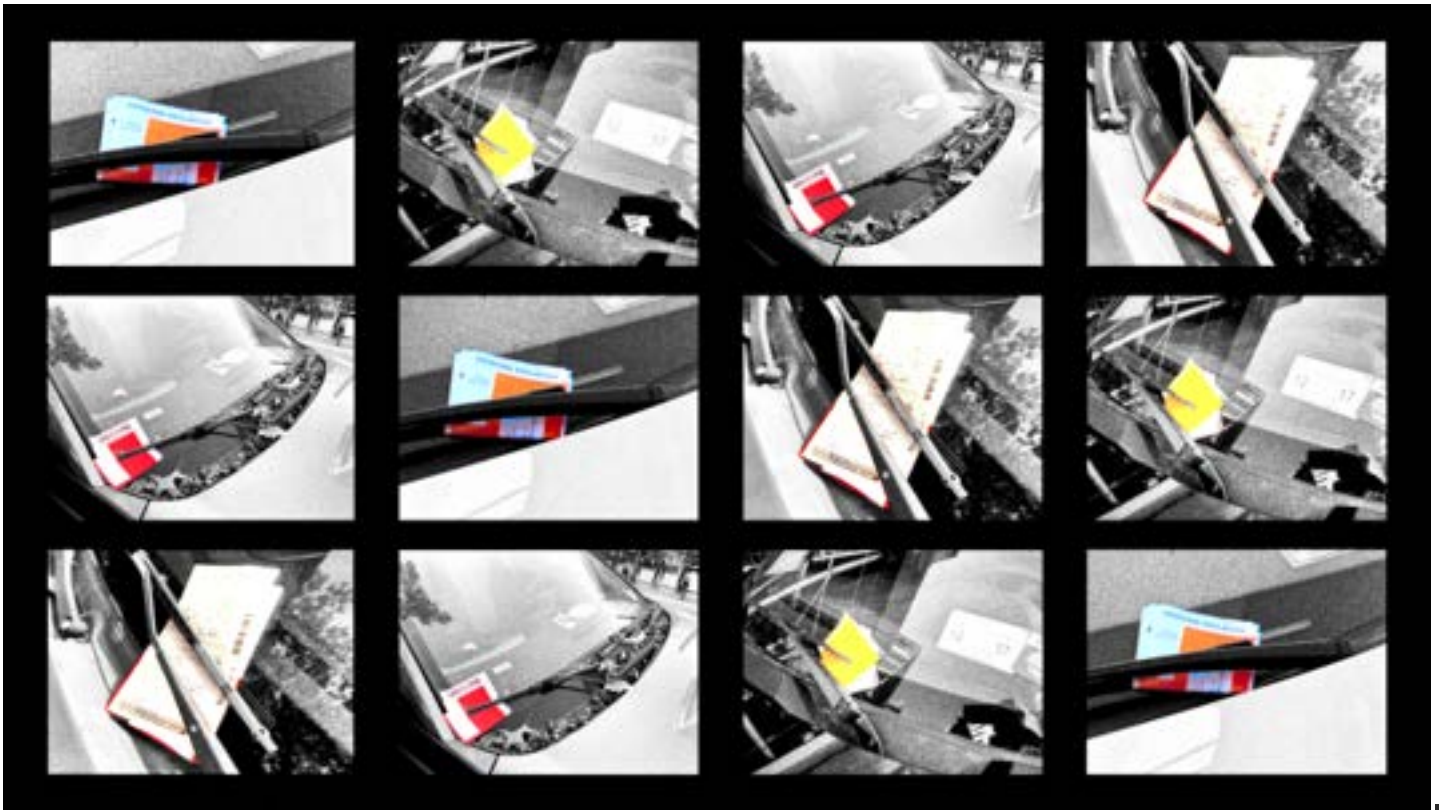
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Mayor Vows to Investigate Alleged Harassment of 311 Users After Recent Streetsblog Investigation

By Jesse Coburn | Oct 28, 2021

"Whether [such calls are] coming from a city employee or someplace else, it's not good," the mayor said when asked about the alleged harassment. "What we need to know is what happened in those cases."



SHERWOOD_000206

Are Cops Writing the Tickets They Say They Are Following 311 Complaints?

By Jesse Coburn | Nov 24, 2021

The NYPD rarely reports ticketing drivers in response to 311 complaints about blocked bike lanes, city data shows. But a new Streetsblog analysis raises doubts whether officers are even writing the tickets that they say they are.



City Investigating NYPD 311 Harassment Allegations After Streetsblog Report

By Jesse Coburn | Dec 21, 2021

The Department of Investigation said agency staffers were probing allegations that Streetsblog reported two months ago.



Council Member Calls For Probe of Alleged 311 Harassment

By Jesse Coburn | Oct 26, 2021

And meanwhile, Council Member Bob Holden told Streetsblog he has also been the victim of "inappropriate" calls from cops.



IGNORED, DISMISSED: How the NYPD Neglects 311 Complaints about Driver Misconduct

By Jesse Coburn | Oct 21, 2021

NYPD cops now close out thousands of 311 complaints about driver misconduct in mere minutes, contributing to a culture of lawlessness on city streets, a Streetsblog investigation into more than 26 million 311 complaints shows.

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